



The Freewinds welcomes local artists for an afternoon with noted artist Carl Röhrig

The Freewinds is a cruise ship that has a long relationship with Aruba, making port here several times during the year, for the last eighteen years. The crew of the ship, led by Port Captain Ludwig Alpers consider themselves part of the Aruban community, and have involved themselves with island life in a variety of ways.

This past Saturday, August 26, the Freewinds hosted a free concert for islanders by an outstanding performer from Dominica, Melisa Henderson. Before the concert, a number of the island's more well known artists were invited to meet with and observe the noted German artist of international repute, Carl W. Röhrig. Mr. Röhrig was aboard the Freewinds as a passenger for a ten-day cruise, but was happy to share his knowledge and experience with Aruba's artists in regards to technique, creative inspiration, and successful marketing. As he created a work before their eyes in the relaxed environs of a spacious lounge, he cheerfully answered countless questions on anything and everything to do with art, and being a successful artist.

When asked about the Dutch painter Van Gogh, aside from his work, which Mr. Röhrig appreciates, he humorously pointed out that unfortunately Van Gogh has set the standard that the public often conceives an artist must be, poverty stricken with a tortured emotional life bordering on insanity. The idea of a happy, financially successful artist would somehow diminish the quality or meaning of the work, at least in the imagination of the public.

Mr. Röhrig then proceeded to prove this notion false as he created a beautiful piece using a variety of techniques and media, including oils, airbrushing and scratching the color away to produce particularly interesting effects. He also spoke of a happy home life, and an industrious attitude towards his work that has him creating at least twelve hours a day, the hours that he confessed are "when he is happiest."

Mr. Röhrig began painting at the age of two and has always loved it. He earned the childhood nickname "Pablo" after a rather well known artist, and is still addressed in that manner by his friends. He studied at the Akademie für Graphisches Gewerbe in Munich under Professor Stetzer where he learned etching, and a very realistic style of art. He feels this was a good foundation, and confesses to a preference for realistic style, even though his subjects are often quite fantastical. "I want my art to tell a story, and for that one's style must be realistic," he explains. A number of his works show the influence of one of his favorite artists, Salvador Dali. He considers one of his first great commercial successes to be the illustration of "The Incredible Machine" published by the National Geographic Society, of which he was made an honorary member in 1984, and for whom he still produces a number of works. A project in progress for the society was on display on the Freewinds during the seminar.

After finishing his work Mr. Röhrig proved a very genial host during a wine and cheese party, which was followed by an evening of contemporary music, shared with other Arubans that filled the cruise ship's nightclub. An international collection of musicians from Italy, France, and Greece provided an exciting evening of entertainment capping off a fascinating afternoon of artistic enlightenment. Port Captain Alpers expressed his delight that the Freewinds had this opportunity to host this informative event with Mr. Röhrig, who so graciously gave of his time and expertise.